Progress your career with Higher Apprenticeships

The sky's the limit

Brought to you by National Apprenticeship Service
British business is feeling the pinch in all kinds of areas. But it’s the shortage of talented workers with vocational, practical skills geared to real business needs that poses one of the biggest long-term threats to UK plc.

Apprenticeships are helping to meet the shortfall. Higher Apprenticeships are the next step up, answering the demand among employers for ways of training more of their workforce to foundation and degree level, and helping them foster innovation and attract the most promising new talent.

The opportunities are expanding fast. We, the National Apprenticeship Service, and the Government want to make more Higher Apprenticeships easily available across a much wider range of skills and sectors.

Read on and find out more about how Higher Apprenticeships can help bridge your business’s skills gap.

“...You get high levels of motivation, loyalty and a can-do attitude which, when coupled with excellent training, can make a real difference to your business.”

John Bevan
Head of Corporate Programmes at British Airways on the company’s Higher Apprenticeships in Project Management
Higher Apprenticeships have the backing of Government and business. The £25 million Higher Apprenticeship Fund launched by the Prime Minister in July 2011 has already helped get around 30 partnerships off the ground with funding to develop Higher Apprenticeships at Levels 4 (Higher Education Certificate) and 5 (foundation degree).

And we’re going higher. Business leaders across industry have also expressed strong support for Apprenticeship accreditation that extends to Levels 6 (BA/BSc) and 7 (MA/MSc).

What this programme of investment will provide is clear, achievable ladders of progression for apprentices to train to the highest levels, and gain the professional qualifications and recognition that their skills and dedication deserve.

“The Higher Apprenticeship programme is an important and exciting development within higher education and provides a great opportunity for employers to engage with universities, further education colleges and other providers to get the high level skills they require to create growth within our economy.”

Professor Joy Carter
Vice-Chancellor of the University of Winchester
University never appealed to me, so after I finished school I joined BT as an apprentice IT technician. While I was on the course, BT paid for me to study for a foundation degree. And I’ve had some amazing experiences, like building a medical centre in Peru and a school in Ecuador, and presenting in front of 200 people. I’ve got loads more confidence now, and it’s all down to the support and respect everyone in the company has shown me. It’s been the making of me.

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The wider range of Higher Apprenticeships will open up new avenues in work and careers for young people and adults. They’ll benefit from:

- New opportunities for career progression
- The potential to achieve graduate and postgraduate-level qualifications
- A unique, new way of developing professional-level, job-specific skills while remaining in employment and earning a salary
- A clear pathway to achieving their ambitions in the workplace, plus higher earning capacity, recognition and status
- The chance to gain professional accreditation and membership

The Highlights... for apprentices
The Highlights... for businesses

Higher Apprenticeships deliver on many levels for businesses:

– With higher apprentices learning at work, they’re able to develop the knowledge and occupational competencies demanded by specific job roles, and meet the unique needs of individual businesses

– There’s a clear, work-based pathway, from craft to technician to professional and managerial skills, mapped out by the progression through Intermediate, Advanced and Higher Apprenticeships

– Higher-level skills are vital to business performance and economic growth – and Higher Apprenticeships are tailor-made to their development

– They put employers in the driving seat when it comes to shaping and delivering learning programmes, based on their own business needs

Higher Apprenticeships are an excellent route to identifying and developing scarce skills within the business as well as providing an attractive pathway for young people into higher education. BAE Systems have identified Higher Apprenticeships in a range of disciplines as part of our commitment to grow high level skills.

Richard Haymer
Education Director & Head of Early Career Programmes, BAE Systems
Case studies

GKN Aerospace

Unilever

PwC
PwC, the world’s largest professional services firm and advisor to some of the world’s most successful organisations, has had no hesitation in embracing the new Higher Apprenticeship.

In 2012, it was the first business to offer positions under the new Professional Services Higher Apprenticeship, which it developed with the input of more than 40 employers, professional bodies and higher education organisations.

It offers talented young people a launch pad for a career in tax, audit or consulting with one of the world’s leading firms, straight from school, while working towards a professional, degree-level qualification. For PwC, which has recruited more than 500 school and college-leavers in the past ten years, its support for Apprenticeships helps generate a wider diversity of skills, knowledge and backgrounds within the company, and supplements its talent pipeline.

PwC intends its Higher Apprenticeships to become a mainstream route to high-skilled careers in the firm. And, having led the development of this bachelor’s degree-level Apprenticeship, the company is now working with a range of partners on a masters-level qualification, covering tax, audit and accounting.

The initial response to our new Higher Apprenticeship has been even better than expected. Talented students who are clear about their career path won’t compromise on training and development, and this offers them a realistic alternative to get into business straight after A-Levels. This new framework further cements our commitment to widening access to the professions, while creating a nationally recognised industry qualification.

Gaenor Bagley
Partner and Head of People
PwC
Case study
GKN Aerospace

For GKN Aerospace – Filton, one of the world's leading suppliers of components to the aviation industry, the combination of craft skills and technical expertise is its lifeblood. The Higher Apprenticeships it has developed with City of Bristol College and Plymouth University are designed to meet this balance, teaching young employees craft skills and an appreciation of how components are designed and built, alongside their high-level learning.

The team at GKN Aerospace – Filton felt that this option best met their business needs, and offered the apprentices the option of topping up to a full engineering degree at Plymouth later in their career if they wished.

On top of a £12,500 salary, the company covers all tuition fees for the apprentices, allowing them to gain a foundation degree in engineering without the fees burden.

Kane Davies, 18, is typical of the first group of higher apprentices. Opting for the Apprenticeship model allows him to learn while he works: “It means I’m not pigeon-holed as an engineer. I’m learning the basics as well as higher-level skills.” Another in the group, David Pumphrey calls the Apprenticeship “a more practical way of learning than being taught from a book”.

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Chris Hobbs (18) left Backwell School Sixth Form having completed A Levels in Maths, Physics and Music Technology. With the support of the Careers Service at the school, Chris applied for his Apprenticeship as it was much more practical, and he felt that he was gaining industry experience in a way that was not possible in a university setting.

Lawrence MacSwan (18) was studying for his A Levels, at Reading Blue Coat Sixth Form when he noticed an advert on the National Apprenticeship vacancies website for the job at GKN Aerospace. With the support of his tutor, he made his application for the Apprenticeship. Lawrence felt that this was a better option for him as he wanted a more practical experience rather than being sat at a desk.

The engineering industry requires qualified engineers in the aeronautical sector. Higher Apprenticeships allow employers to fill this skills gap while offering students a new route into higher education.

Lynn Merilion
Principal at City of Bristol College
Research and development investment in the UK remains high, but there is a severe skills shortage in the area. The country has no dedicated degree-level courses in R&D, and just a few that cover it in any meaningful way. That’s now set to change with the launch of the new Research and Development pathways within Cogent’s Higher Apprenticeship in Chemical Science. This offers employees and young people access to a vocational career path in the science, engineering and technology industries.

The Higher Apprenticeship was developed based on a Foundation Degree, followed by a BSc or BEng, at the University of Hull. The degree has a high level of work-based learning which brings together university studies and practical work in the workplace. This is complemented by a training and development programme within Unilever. The whole scheme has been evaluated by Cogent and fits into the approved apprenticeship framework providing development for our future chemists, mechanical and chemical engineers.

The first three apprentices were taken on by Unilever, the global consumer goods company, to help develop its next generation of deodorants. Sue Timme, Operations Manager for Unilever, says, “There aren’t many people around the world who have the knowledge and skills we need to make brands such as Sure, Lynx, Dove and Impulse such a success, so by training on the Higher Apprenticeship in Research and Development, we can ensure that our business thrives in the future and people stay smelling sweet with the help of talented and knowledgeable scientists.”

Case study
Unilever

I never thought I’d have a career in deodorants, but it’s amazing to see how many different aspects there are in the packaging and how much engineering experience I’ll get over the next six years; I’m really looking forward to getting started.

Bob Mitcheson
Higher apprentice in Research and Development
Higher Apprenticeships have the potential to create a step-change in the way UK businesses fill the skills gap. We’d like you to be part of that change.

Our vision for Higher Apprenticeships is that they:
- Endow young people and adults with the higher-level skills that can drive growth in British businesses
- Take the Apprenticeship culture to new levels, into new sectors of the economy and new professions, and to a new cohort of learners
- Create new opportunities for businesses to attract skilled, ambitious candidates, recruit professionals, up-skill their existing workforce and professionalise their sector
- Become the choice of employers for meeting their workforce development needs

“Further Education Colleges have a long and proven track record in the delivery of Apprenticeships. Many FE colleges now offer higher education courses. We must build on and utilise this extensive expertise in the development of Higher Apprenticeships.”

Rachel Davies
Chief Executive and Principal, Somerset College of Arts and Technology
### Employers linked to developments in Higher Apprenticeship frameworks

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apprenticeships.gov.uk